



The village smithies of Weston. (Bill Wendy Kippen shared a photo album.)



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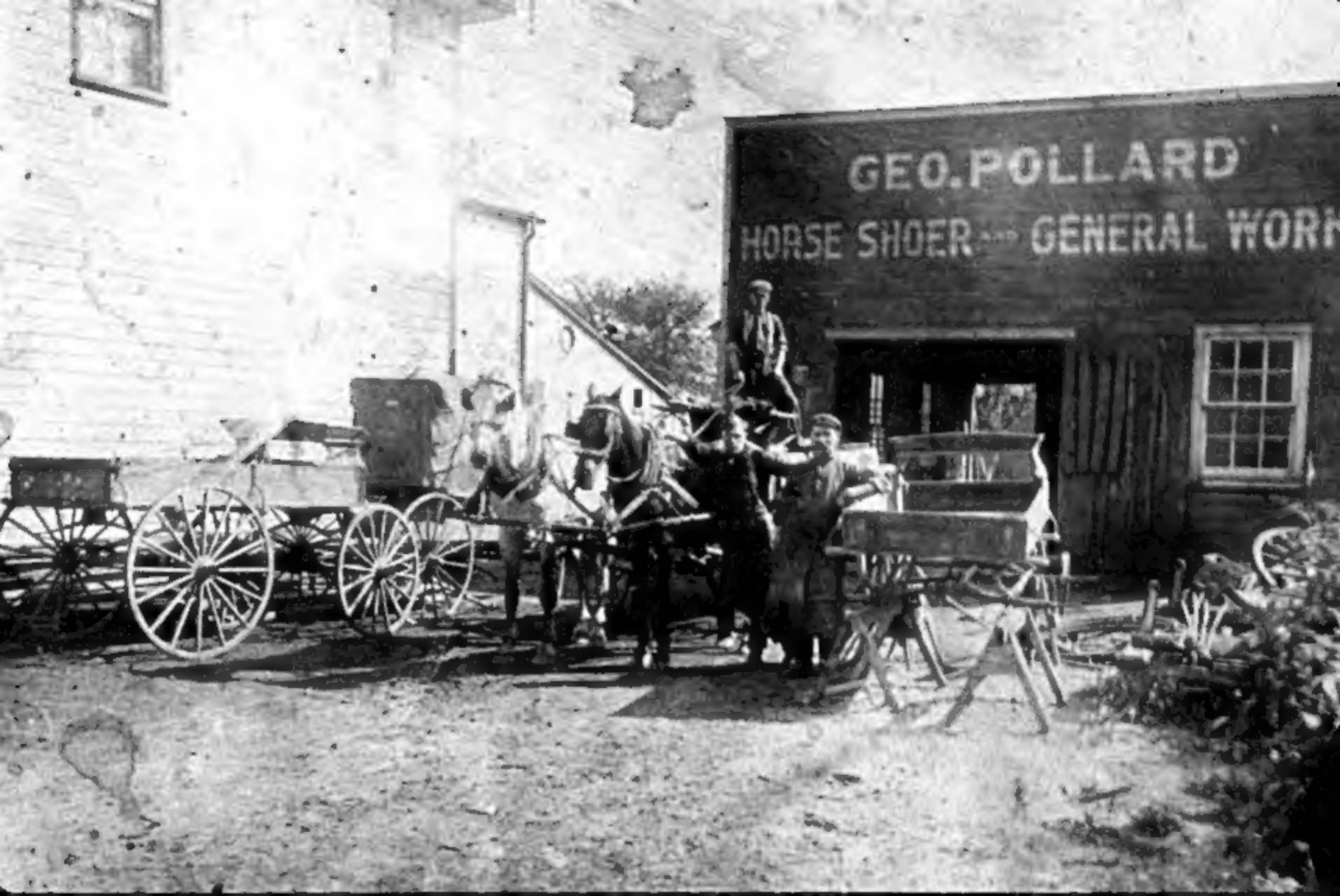
THE AUCTIONEER  
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M-CORNICK DEERING





# Oldest Operating Blacksmith Shop In Weston Area To Be Razed; Building More Than 70 Years Old

**THE TIMES & GUIDE** Thursday, Aug. 24, 1961 **3**

Either that, or there is some magic formula for long life in the pungent air of an old-time blacksmith shop. Has anybody got around to telling the women about this?

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# Oldest Operating Blacksmith Shop In Weston Area To Be Razed; Building More Than 70 Years Old

A veteran of a previous successful struggle against the tide of change and progress, the familiar blacksmith shop on Weston's South Station Street appears doomed after more than 70 years.

A realtor's sign on the wall

of the still-sturdy brick building announces that "this valuable commercial or industrial site is for sale."

## Mobile Structure

No one is quite sure when the present building was first erected; the consensus is that it was

well before the turn of the century.

Incontestable records exist which prove that the building survived a brick-by-brick removal 58 years ago that few, if any, modern structures could stand.

According to documents in the vaults of the Bank of Montreal, the original location of the blacksmith's shop was on the site of the present Weston branch of the Bank at the northeast corner of John and Weston road.

In 1907 the Bank purchased the property from the late James Irvine who proceeded to move the blacksmith shop, brick by brick to the present location on the west side of South Station Street. A check of the present condition of the shop building indicates that they not only knew how to build in the old days; they were also pretty handy at rebuilding.

The blacksmith shop was originally owned by James Irvine, who was the owner of record when the land on which it stood at the corner of Weston road and John street was purchased by the Bank of Montreal in 1907.

Mr. Irvine continued to operate the shop when it was moved to South Station Street. George Pollard worked in the shop at that time. Later he went into business for himself, establishing his shop on the west side of Weston road south of Lawrence avenue. The Pollard blacksmith shop is now incorporated into the rear of the building which houses Pollard's Appliances on the same site.

Subsequently, the Irvine shop on South Street was sold to a Mr. Martin and later still to John Saunders.

In 1920 James Mobbs, who still operates the blacksmith shop, purchased the property from John Saunders.

## The Rearing Twenties

Born in London, England, James Mobbs came to Canada at an early age, was apprenticed to a blacksmith named Charles Husband who operated a shop

the depression, there was a return to the use of horses for merchandise delivery. The boom was short-lived, however. The truck won out, even during the deepest periods of depression.

In recent years practically all the work done by Jim Mobbs has been in the field of special handwork for interior decorators and home owners.

What little horse-shoeing he is called on to perform is usually on contract to sportsmen, with the work being done at the horseman's own farm or stables.

## Aromatic Past

To anyone past forty, a visit to the South Station Street shop is like a trip into childhood, with the remembered smells evoking memories of vanished era.

To Jim Mobbs, the changes of the past 40 years have been neither remarkable nor regrettable.

"I'll be 70 on my next birthday," he said in a recent interview. "I've seen many things change in my time. Some were good; some weren't. But that's the way of things. Time is change and the more we live through, the more changes we see."

"In many ways, life today is much better than when I was a youngster. Some fine things have changed and passed away, of course. But I suppose that is how we have to pay for the improvements we have experienced."

## Fountain Of Youth

The actuarial experts who compile life-expectancy tables have long known that blacksmiths live to ripe old ages. The fact has been recorded but no one has yet come up with any logical explanation for the longevity of practitioners of the smith's art.



A VIEW FROM TWO THRESHOLDS is taken by James Mobbs at his blacksmith shop on Weston's South Station Street. Mr. Mobbs, who is 69, is on the threshold of his eighth decade. From the doorway of

his shop, which, as a structure, is as old as he is, Mr. Mobbs contemplates a recently installed parking meter with emotions impossible to determine from his expression.



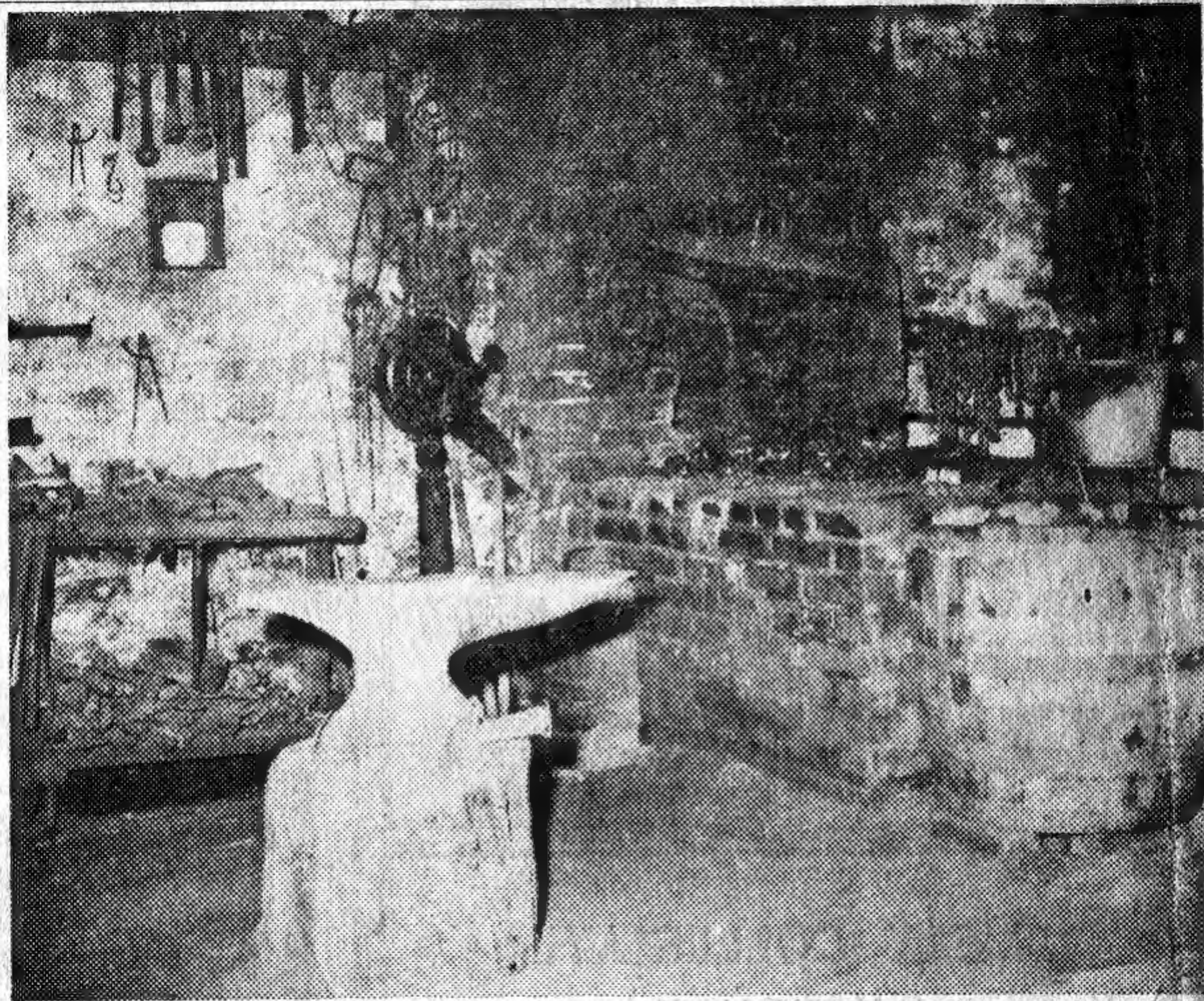


his signal detector from the doorway of



AT WORK ON THE ANVIL





INTERIOR WITHOUT FIGURES



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## The Roaring 'Twenties

Born in London, England, James Mobbs came to Canada at an early age, was apprenticed to a blacksmith named Charles Husband, who operated a shop on the outskirts of Owen Sound.

In 1920, at the age of 28, James Mobbs took over the South Station Street shop.

Even though the automobile was becoming popular, there was still plenty of work for a blacksmith in the 1920's, Mr. Mobbs recalls.

"Practically all the bread and milk deliveries were made from horse-drawn wagons," he said. "Most Weston stores had wagons for delivering merchandise to their customers."

Toward the end of that decade, shoeing horses took up less and less of his working time. However, with the onset of



the depression, there was a return to the use of horses for merchandise delivery. The boom was short-lived, however. The truck won out, even during the deepest periods of depression.

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The work is hard and tiring; the hours are long; the clients—the horses of the earlier time—were often rambunctious and dangerous to work with.

Nevertheless, Jim Mobbs, hale and hearty at 70, recalls that the Charles Husband who taught him his trade lived to be 92.

George Pollard, who was a partner of Jim Irvine back in 1907, is still a very live and lively gentleman of 92.

Maybe the old blacksmiths, like the buildings they worked in, were meant for long, worthwhile service.



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